

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-13 and 17-34, without prejudice.

Please amend claims 14 and 17-19, as follows:

C1  
14. (Twice amended) A method of inhibiting the activity of a gene, the method comprising introducing an RNAi agent into a cell, wherein the RNAi agent is prepared by incubating a double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) component in the presence of an RNAi pathway component, and wherein the dsRNA component is targeted to the gene.

17. (Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the RNAi pathway component is an RDE-1 polypeptide.

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18. (Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the RNAi pathway component is an RDE-4 polypeptide.

19. (Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein the RNAi pathway components are an RDE-1 polypeptide and an RDE-4 polypeptide.

Please add new claim 35, as follows:

C2  
35. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein the RNAi agent is prepared by incubating the dsRNA component in the presence of at least two RNAi pathway components.